

Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension

Historic District

West 118th–123rd Streets between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevards

Designation Date: September 22, 2015



133 to 143 West 122nd Street, Francis H. Kimball c.1885. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension Designation Report. Photo by Christopher D. Brazee, 2015.

The Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension consists of approximately 276 properties primarily located on six blocks immediately west of the existing Mount Morris Park Historic District, which was designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1971. The proposed historic district extension, which encompasses more than 250 row houses and approximately 12 apartment buildings on the blocks between West 118th to 123rd Street, Fifth Avenue, Malcolm X Boulevard, and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard shares a development history with the existing Mount Morris Park Historic District. Many of the architects and developers responsible for structures within the existing historic district were also responsible for the buildings within the proposed extension.

Like the Mount Morris Park Historic District, the streets of the historic district extension are lined with masonry row houses of exceptional quality that reflected Harlem's development as an affluent residential community following the extension of rapid transit into the area

around 1880. Similar to the previously-designated historic district, the buildings within the Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension display a variety of architectural styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The earliest buildings in the historic district extension are three Second Empire style brick row houses with mansard roofs at 124 to 128 West 123rd Street (1870, Abraham Slater); they also feature gabled dormers, brownstone stoops, and molded window lintels. There are several neo-Grec style rows, including 156 to 168 West 123rd Street (1884–85, Jacob Valentine); these brownstone-clad houses feature ornament typical of that style, including incised window and doors surrounds, bracketed window sills and door lintels, and wood cornices with brackets and dentils. There are six Queen Anne style row houses at 133 to 143 West 122nd Street (1885–87, Francis H. Kimball). This stunning row exhibits many of the hallmarks of the Queen Anne Style, including the mixed use of materials (brick, sandstone, and terra cotta), as well as a variety of surface treatments, window and door configurations, geometrical ironwork, and irregular rooflines.

A row of Romanesque Revival style row houses is located at 112 to 128 West 120th Street (1893–94, Neville & Bagge). These limestone- or sandstone-faced residences feature broad stoops, rough-faced ashlar, round-arch openings, and geometrical and foliated decoration. There is an unusual row of neo-Gothic style houses at 103 to 107 West 119th Street (1892–93, Thomas M. Fanning), which feature pointed-arch entryways, label lintels, and foliation. A pair of Renaissance Revival style apartment buildings at the northwest corner of Malcolm X Boulevard and West 118th Street (161 and 163 Malcolm X Boulevard, 1895–96, John C. Burne) display ornamentation typical of that style, including molded window surrounds, keystones, bracketed cornices, and triangular and curved pediments. There is a Beaux Arts style apartment building at 2 West 120th Street (1900–01, George F. Pelham) that has a prominent, two-story main entryway composition consisting of rusticated piers, oversized brackets supporting a hood topped by a balustrade with urns, rope moldings and festoons, and a gable broken by a central cartouche.

The row houses, mainly built as single-family dwellings, were originally occupied by prosperous middle class households, but by the turn of the 20th century, a less-affluent population, consisting mostly of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, began to move in. Many of these residences were eventually converted into rooming houses and small apartment buildings. By the late 1920s, the Mount Morris Park area began to attract a large African American population, becoming an important part of black Harlem and the home to numerous prominent black residents. The area today remains one of New York City's most vibrant African American communities.

Many of the houses in the neighborhood retain a high degree of integrity. Together, the buildings within the Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension represent a cohesive unit whose quality, design, and workmanship create an exceptional character and strong sense of place.

[Read the full NYC LPC designation report here.](#)

[Read our testimony supporting the designation here.](#)